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SIPDIS

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LONDON FOR TSOU
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FOREIGN PRESS CENTER FOR SILAS

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TAGS: [OIIP](#) [KPAO](#) [KMDR](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: OMAN MEDIA REACTION: CRISIS IN LEBANON

11. SUMMARY: Private Arabic daily "Al-Watan" lamented the Lebanese violence, morbidly predicting unalterable changes to Lebanon's very nature. State-owned Arabic daily "Oman" on May 11 called on Arab nations to play positive, unbiased roles, then, on May 12, backed the Lebanese Army and Suleiman as possible saviors of the country.
END SUMMARY.

No Longer Known for Tolerance and Compromise

12. On May 10, privately owned Arabic "Al-Watan" (circulation 42,000) predicted that the outbreak of violence in Lebanon will spin out of control, altering forever the nature of the country, calling it a "Time of Hypocrites and Thieves":

"The tension in Lebanon escalated and evolved into armed clashes on the streets of Beirut... There is no indication of hope to stop the crisis in Lebanon; the situation is expected to spin out of control, with the language of dialogue replaced by that of arms and disagreement. This war will kill innocent people who have no role in it, sparing those who ignited the war. Lebanon will no longer be known for tolerance and compromise... Nor will it be known as an Arab country that used to exist on the map of Arab countries. The time will come when Arabs will say that there was an Arab country called Palestine, there was an Arab country called Iraq, and there was an Arab country called Lebanon."

Serving Their Own Interests

13. On May 11, Government-owned Arabic "Oman" (circulation 38,000) blamed international players for their self-serving roles in the Lebanese conflict and called for their positive intervention, saying "Resolving the Lebanese Dilemma is the Responsibility of All":

"Regional and international powers are only serving their own interests at the expense of the Lebanese. It is not surprising that the Lebanese situation has deteriorated again, taking it back to conditions that existed in the civil war of 1975. The Arabs who proposed the Arab initiative to resolve this crisis should uphold their responsibilities without bias towards one Lebanese party or another. They must search for a Lebanese consensus, which is indispensable to resolve the current predicament. The question that also arises is: to what extent are the Lebanese willing to go to reach a consensus that can save Lebanon, prevent its collapse and the disintegration of its constitutional institutions?"

Enhancing Confidence in the Lebanese Army

14. On May 12, Oman talked up the role of the Lebanese Army, calling on the Lebanese parliament to elect Army General Suleiman as president. "To Not Let Lebanon Face Similar Threats" said:

"Despite continuing and sporadic clashes, the possibility of a Lebanese reconciliation presents a chance to enhance confidence in the Lebanese army, which has managed to contain tension in the past.

Now is not time for accusations; rather, it is time to contain the situation and to return Lebanon to normal. Then, the situation must be dealt with through concrete steps to reach solutions, without falling prey to procrastination through dialogue. The first step will be for the Lebanese Parliament to elect the commander of the Lebanese Army General Michel Suleiman, who enjoys the respect and approval of all parties, as President. Then, they must form a united, strong and effective government able to impose state authority in preparation for upcoming general elections."

GRAPPO